

Coast Guard Academy Board of Trustees Chairperson Job Description

Authority/Responsibility

The Coast Guard Academy Board of Trustees Charter, signed by the Commandant, serves as the official document assigning the Assistant Commandant for Human Resources as Chairperson. The Chairperson is responsible for the governance of the Board of Trustees which represents the interest of the Academy and the Coast Guard at large.

Purpose

The Chairperson's primary purpose is to coordinate Board of Trustees' participation in the articulation of the Academy's strategic direction and to convey relevant information to the Board, the Commandant, and the Board of Visitors. The Chairperson fosters Trustees' participation in regular meetings and provides opportunities to best utilize their talents to positively affect the Academy. The Chairperson encourages Trustees to additionally participate in campus events or activities that will enhance their understanding of Academy programs, student life, and familiarity with key faculty and staff. The Chairperson is the official leader of the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities

Chairperson responsibilities include:

- Develop meeting agendas in coordination with the Superintendent;
- Assign Trustees to committees and ensuring associated appointment letters are signed by the Commandant;
- Provide Board and Committee goals at the beginning of the academic year in coordination with the Superintendent;
- Ensure that Trustees continue to focus on Board and Committee work in-between meetings;
- Submit Board reports, for Commandant review, after each meeting;
- Meet with the Commandant and Chief of Staff in order to promote the Academy or to provide information regarding the Academy;
- Provide Trustees and committees with resources, tools, information, or advice to enhance Board performance;
- Develop skills relating to Board governance, policy, and programs;
- Advocate the Academy's prioritized resource requirements list;
- Promote the Academy to the Coast Guard at-large, the Department of Homeland Security, and the American society;
- Ensure the Academy's strategic direction aligns with the long-term strategies of the Commandant and the Department of Homeland Security;
- Collaborate with other Boards and groups including, but not limited to, the Board of Visitors, the Coast Guard Alumni Association, the Coast Guard Foundation, etc.;

- Champion efforts associated with giving, getting, and friend-raising, and;
- Coordinate Board of Trustee's revisions of documents associated with the Board, from time to time as needed, including the Charter, Trustee job description, Chairperson job description, etc.

Guiding References

The following references are essential for effective Board governance:

- The Coast Guard Academy Board of Trustees Charter;
- The job description for the members of the Coast Guard Academy Board of Trustees;
- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) publications, including two regularly published periodicals, Trusteeship and Priorities;
- American Council on Education, and;
- Chronicle of Higher Education.

Characteristics of an Effective Chairperson

Appendix (A) provides quantitative results of a survey related to characteristics of an effective chairperson.

Appendix A – Characteristics of an Effective Chairperson

Research conducted in 2003¹ identified the following Chairperson characteristics as important:

- The Chairperson is firmly grounded in and can clearly articulate the mission, values, and strategic direction of the institution;
- The Chairperson demonstrates conflict-resolution and consensus-building skills;
- The Chairperson runs efficient, effective meetings;
- The Chairperson clearly understands and openly respects the differences in the relative responsibilities and functions of the board;
- The Chairperson is willing to take the initiative;
- The Chairperson is willing to consider new approaches to framing and solving problems as well as to dealing with familiar routines;
- The Chairperson is adept at facilitating compromise;
- The Chairperson demonstrates a leadership partnership with the Superintendent;
- The Chairperson attempts to continuously improve governance and leadership effectiveness;
- The Chairperson commits adequate time and energy to the responsibilities of the position;
- The Chairperson promotes ongoing board self-evaluation and continuous self-improvement;
- The Chairperson is a good listener (active listening vs. passive hearing);
- The Chairperson leads the consensus-building process when resource advice must be provided in fiscal matters (i.e., determining priorities in a resource constrained environment);
- The Chairperson appoints Trustees whose talents will be put to good use (i.e., membership should reflect diversity of talent, thought, and background);
- The Chairperson creates an atmosphere for candid open discussion.

¹ Board members completed the survey presented in Trusteeship (Orlikoff, J.E., A Board As Good As Its Chair, July-Aug 2000) during the 2002-2003 AY. Eight surveys were returned (53% response rate).